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THE FUTURE OF MARINE CIVIL AFFAIRS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Subject: The Future of Marine Civil Affairs

Thesis: The Marine Corps' role in fighting the global war on terrorism involves the extensive conduct of civil military operations (CMO). However, current shortfalls in the Corps' approach to Civil Affairs (CA) force structure and to CMO education, training, and employment impede its ability to use these operations to their greatest effect. The author proposes solutions to these shortfalls which would result in the establishment of a cadre of active duty civil affairs Marines, the implementation of a formal training program for CA personnel, the integration of CMO into the Marine Corps' resident schools and the use of planning procedures that focus on CMO as a line of operation.

Background: US military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa involve extensive interaction with the local populations. Reports from the field emphasize the importance of civil military operations in obtaining operational goals.

Discussion: Shortfalls and recommended solutions are discussed under the headings of Structure, Training, Education and Employment:

- **Structure:** There are insufficient Marine CA personnel to meet current demands. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that all Marine CA personnel are drawn from the reserve component resulting in delays in mobilization, lack of training time and the inability to sustain skill levels. Current plans to give artillery units the secondary mission of CA go some way to addressing the shortfall in numbers but do not solve the qualitative issues: training and expertise.
Recommended Solution: To create an active duty civil affairs component of 102 (optimum) and 44 (minimum to meet current needs) personnel. These Marines would be drawn from other occupational fields for a three year tour.
- **Training:** Very few CA Marines receive any formal training.
Recommended Solution: To negotiate an agreement with the Army whereby CA Marines can attend the Army CA qualification course and other specialist courses. All active duty CA Marines would attend these courses; they would then form the training cadres for the Civil Affairs Groups (CAGs). In the absence of a Marine active duty CA component, Army CA schools training teams should be used to train a cadre of reservist instructors who would then run a standardized Marine CA course.
- **Education:** Although most deployed Marines are involved in civil military operations, the Marine Corps currently does not integrate CMO into the curriculum of any of its professional military education schools or programs.
Recommended Solution: For MCU and other schools to establish habitual relationships with civilian agencies and to incorporate CMO into formal classes and practical exercises.
- **Employment:** In the short term, operating forces must find methods of integrating CMO with other aspects of operations.
Recommended Solution: To establish procedures whereby CMO is integrated as a line of operation, and CA personnel are involved in OPTs and targeting boards.

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THE FUTURE OF MARINE CIVIL AFFAIRS

CMO [civil-military operations] are conducted to minimize civilian interference with military operations, to maximize support for operations, and to meet the commander's legal responsibilities and moral obligations to civilian populations within the commander's area of control."

JP 3-57, Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Operations

"All CA [civil affairs] activities support CMO [civil-military operations]. They embrace the relationship of military forces with civil authorities, NGOs [nongovernmental organizations], IOs [international organizations], and populations in areas where military forces are present."

FM 3-05.40, Civil Affairs Operations¹

INTRODUCTION

The Marine Corps' role in fighting the global war on terrorism involves the extensive conduct of civil military operations (CMO) as an indispensable aspect of its counter-insurgency efforts – whatever the theater. However, current shortfalls in the Marine Corps' approach to Civil Affairs (CA) force structure, and to CMO education, training and employment, impede its ability to use these operations to their greatest effect.

The solutions recommended below are intended to improve the Corps' ability to conduct CMO by augmenting the number and quality of Marine CA personnel, by ensuring that these personnel receive the training required to plan and execute CA missions, and by integrating CMO training into the Marine Corps' education and training programs. These recommendations are followed by a discussion of how commanders and staffs can facilitate the integration of CMO by treating them as a line of operation, focusing multiple functions, civilian and military, kinetic and non-kinetic to achieve operational goals.

IMPORTANCE OF CMO TO OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Combatant and combined joint task force (CJTF) commanders establish operational goals that are designed to shape the circumstances of their area of operations

(AO) to attain strategic objectives. These goals vary according to the circumstances of each AO, but in the case of Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa (HOA), the most prominent battlegrounds in the war on terrorism, all three CJTF commanders list among their goals the establishment of security, stability and sustainability. Given the nature of each of these AOs, military forces cannot hope to attain these goals without engaging the civil population – which requires the extensive use of civil-military operations.²

Whether fighting an active counter-insurgency, as in Afghanistan and Iraq, or seeking to pre-empt one from taking hold, as in HOA, the commander's success hinges upon his ability to separate the insurgent from his base of support, the local community. Civil Affairs provide a commander with the means to erode the insurgent's hold on the local population while enabling civilian contractors, governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to assist the local community with their expertise in health, economic development, governance, and education. The desired end-state is an empowered and self sustaining local population, favorably disposed towards security forces, both Coalition and indigenous. Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa and Iraq provide examples of how civil military operations are employed to achieve operational goals.

From the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, US military commanders have come to recognize the importance of civil military operations; a realization that has also confronted the Army with existing shortfalls in its conduct of CMO.³ It is a re-current theme of after-action reports (AARs) from Marine units that have deployed to Afghanistan over the last two years that most of their efforts were focused on the conduct of civil military operations.⁴

In the Horn of Africa, a region of strategic importance in the war on terrorism, CA/CMO are the primary means by which the US led task force, CJTF HOA, pursues its operational objectives: the pre-emption of hostile organizations and acts in the region.⁵ In several volatile and potentially hostile areas on the Horn of Africa, such as in the Somali border region of Ethiopia, the responsibility for furthering US foreign policy rests in the hands of five-man US Army CA teams, each of which is led by a Captain. There can be few other areas of the US military where individuals of commensurate rank are in a position to leverage strategic results.⁶

In Iraq, Marine units use CMO to counter-balance the pervasive use of intimidation by which insurgents exert control over the local population. CMO enable commanders to overcome misconceptions and cultural barriers while alleviating the community's most urgent needs. As a senior I MEF staff officer recently commented: “*Everything that we do here at the MEF has a CMO component.....everything*”⁷

The relevance of civil affairs and civil military operations is unlikely to diminish in the foreseeable future. With this in mind, the Marine Corps should take a critical look at improving its current CA capability.

USMC CIVIL AFFAIRS – SHORTFALLS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

The Marine Corps does not have enough Civil Affairs personnel to meet current commitments. Very few Marine Civil Affairs personnel receive formal training or possess any regional or functional expertise. Nor does the Corps integrate CMO into the curriculum of any of its professional military education schools or programs. As a result, Marine leaders often have to determine for themselves how to conduct civil military operations.

These shortfalls will be categorized below under the headings of Structure, Training, Education and Employment; however the issues involved are often linked by cause and effect. For instance, the shortfall in quality among CA personnel is partly due to inadequate training but is also a consequence of a force structure that relies on drawing CA personnel exclusively from the reserve component. Likewise, the failure to employ CA personnel effectively is attributable partly to their selection and training and partly to deficiencies in the CMO education and training of non-CA Marines. Nevertheless, the categories facilitate an ordered approach to recommending solutions.

STRUCTURE. Currently, Marine CA personnel are formed into 2 Civil Affairs Groups (CAG), each of which has a table of organization (T/O) of 154 personnel.⁸ Customarily, a CAG will support a MEF by providing a headquarters group and teams in support of subordinate units of the MEF. The two existing CAGs each deployed for OIF I and II with between 50 and 100 personnel over their T/O. After action reports emphasize that even with 250 Marines, a CAG is hard pressed to adequately support a MEF.⁹ The fact that all Marine CA personnel are drawn from the reserve component exacerbates the problem with delays in mobilization, lack of training and inability to sustain skill levels.¹⁰

The Marine Corps cannot sustain this level of CA support. By the end of OIF I alone the Marine Corps had deployed 100% of its CA personnel and in order to provide CA support for OIF 2-3 and OIF 3-1, the Corps was forced to form two ad hoc CAGs, designated 5th and 6th, drawn from non-CA personnel.¹¹

Plans are afoot within the Marine Corps to address the shortfall in Civil Affairs personnel. In December 2005 Headquarters Marine Corps released a message giving

Marine artillery units the secondary mission of conducting civil military operations.

Under this directive, an artillery regiment with one of its subordinate battalions,

augmented by a reserve CA detachment, would provide CA support for a deployed

MEF.¹²

This proposal has several advantages. It places in support of the MEF's CMO capability a cohesive unit constituting several hundred Marines with robust transportation, communications force protection and logistics assets. The regimental headquarters could provide a command and control capability to facilitate the formation of subordinate task forces tailored for civil affairs related missions. Ostensibly, it appears that this solution will solve the shortage of CA personnel.

One weakness in the proposal that threatens to undermine its success may be the lack of civil affairs personnel with adequate expertise. Effective interaction with indigenous populations requires language skills and regional knowledge, as well as training in the general techniques and procedures of CA/CMO. None of these skills are likely to be found in an artillery regiment, and, since the proposal emphasizes that CA will be the unit's *secondary* duty, it would not be realistic to expect the commander to devote much valuable pre-deployment time to CA training. As the size of USMC participation in the OIF rotation cycle diminishes, it is probable that the artillery community will return to a more exclusive focus on its primary mission.¹³

The proposal to attach a CA reserve detachment to the artillery regiment is a partial but inadequate solution. The Marine Corps currently puts few of its CA personnel through any type of formal training – a problem that needs to be addressed separately. Civil Affairs require a level of training, expertise and regional indoctrination difficult to

sustain in the reserve component. Unlike other Reserve units, CAGs do not have a cadre of active duty instructor-inspector staff to provide them with a core of continuity and experience. Compounding the problem is the high turnover rate among CAGs which makes it difficult to sustain a consistent level of unit expertise.¹⁴

Civil Military Operations deal with culture, law, fiscal responsibilities, human rights, security assistance, intelligence, rules of engagement, and information operations, involving close coordination with NGOs, IGOs and foreign governments at multiple levels. The complexity of the mission requires specially selected and trained individuals. It is hard to justify the Marine Corps' assumption that Reserve personnel, who go through only a very cursory process of selection and training, will be able to do all of these things.

For instance, once the proposed plan is implemented, the CA team attached to the artillery regiment will have to conduct area assessments -- interacting with local leaders and planning the most effective and efficient means of meeting the local population's most critical needs while undermining the counter-insurgency in that area. This might involve the establishment of an ad hoc CMO unit whose task organization would include artillerymen, military engineers, medical personnel, a psychological operations (PsyOp) detachment, translators and military police. Such a unit would also require civil affairs personnel with contracting and legal expertise as well as the cultural and negotiation skills that will enable them to navigate the complex web of local politics.¹⁵ The CA team leader must always have in mind the operational mandates and understand how to integrate his actions to achieve these goals.

The Army has recognized and addressed the requirement for an Active Duty CA component structured to deploy rapidly and provide CA support to military operations.

The 96th CA Battalion, the only active duty CA unit, consists of trained and carefully selected personnel, formed into six companies, each of which has a regional affiliation.¹⁶

Similarly, though on a smaller scale, the Marine Corps could solve its shortfall in trained CA personnel by establishing an active duty CA component which would be able to undergo the extensive civil affairs and other specialist training demanded by the complexity of its mission.

A relatively small number of active duty CA personnel would boost the Marine Corps CA capability sufficiently to meet current needs. Whether the Corps retains its two CAG structure or, as has been recommended, forms a third standing CAG, the active duty CA Marines would be divided among the existing CAGs increasing the latter's T/O.¹⁷ When deployed with their parent CAG, they would provide CA planning teams to augment the staffs of the MEF, Division and artillery regiment. The remaining teams would be assigned by the CAG in direct support of units in the same manner as their reservist counterparts. Those remaining in the States would prepare for the following deployment by undergoing training and then, upon mobilization of their CAG, by forming a training cadre for the reservists. This system would also make available active duty CA teams for deployment in support of non OIF contingencies.

The optimum number of active duty CA Marines would be 102 (48 officers and 54 enlisted) which, under the current two-CAG system, would augment each CAG with 51 personnel. This number would allow each deploying CAG to support the MEF, from the Command element down to the infantry regiments, with active duty CA teams. If the decision is made to form three CAGs, each one would have 34 active duty Marines, easing the problem of sourcing the increased demand for trained CA personnel.¹⁸

The minimum number of active duty CA personnel required to meet current needs would be 44 (26/18). This option would support two CAGs at a time, allowing the deploying CAG to provide active duty teams to the MEF command element, division headquarters and CA-role artillery regiment (vice down to the infantry regiments), with the emphasis being on providing CA planning expertise. This number would still support a three CAG system – the active duty component of the deploying CAG would, upon their return, form the cadre for the third CAG. (For a detailed layout of three active duty augmentation options see Appendix 1).

These active duty CA Marines should be selected for their operational experience which would enable them to advise commanders on how best to integrate CMO into tactical operations. Their training would equip them with the various skills required for their mission. They would have the regional and linguistic expertise to understand the nuances of local political and religious affiliations. They would have an understanding of how to use information operations to their best effect to influence the local population. They would be familiar with the multiple funding sources available for civil military projects, and be able to put money into the hands of local contractors in the most expeditious but legally compatible manner. They would know how to establish mutually beneficial relationships with host nation and US governmental organizations and NGOs. While not necessarily being experts in any particular field of Civil Affairs, they would be skilled “generalists”, knowing enough to conduct assessments and then bring the various experts together to execute projects.

In sourcing these Marines, one course of action might be to take them from other occupational fields for a 3 year “career- broadening” tour. The artillery community seems

particularly well suited to provide personnel for such a tour in view of its diminished role in the war on terrorism, which currently leads to some artillery units deploying to Iraq as in the role of infantry.¹⁹ This course of action would complement the proposal to give artillery regiments the secondary mission of civil affairs; active duty CA units attached to artillery regiments would be led by officers from the same community. Whether drawn exclusively from the artillery or from a variety of backgrounds, at least some of these personnel should be allowed to remain in Civil Affairs upon completion of their tour.

Once selected, CA Marines would undergo a training program that begins with the Army's CA qualification course followed by specialized training in languages, funding, contracting, NGO coordination, staff planning and information operations.

Language and cultural training is of particular importance; OIF after action comments from the leadership of both CAGs emphasize the need for more linguists.²⁰ Once active duty CA Marines have completed the CA qualification course, selected individuals should be sent to full length language courses offered by the Defense Language Institute (DLI) or the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), while all active duty CA personnel are given a two-week to one-month immersion course at the Marine Corp's Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) in Quantico.²¹

The provision of an active duty component in the Marine CA community does not obviate the argument that the bulk of our CA personnel should still come from the Reserve community. However, in order to capitalize on the potential complimentary strengths of both active duty and reserve Marines, every effort should be made to recruit reservists whose civilian background gives them expertise likely to be of use in their military role.²²

TRAINING. All active duty and most reservist Army CA personnel attend a nine-week CA qualification course at the Special Warfare Center (SWC) at Fort Bragg. They also receive language and regional studies training at the SWC. By comparison, only a small percentage of CA Marines, officer or enlisted, receive any kind of formal training; those that do are usually sent through an abbreviated two-week course, described as being little more than an orientation.²³ Although the length of the Army's CA qualification course would be prohibitive for most Marine reservists, there are several mutually supporting feasible solutions.

If the Marine Corps pursues the option of forming an active duty CA component then these Marines would attend the Army's Civil Affairs qualification course prior to forming the training cadres for their parent CAGs.²⁴ If it is not practical to send all of these personnel through the Army's course then the Marine Corps could request that the SWC provide a mobile training team (MTT) for the same purpose. If the Corps continues to source its CA personnel exclusively from the reserve component then the MTT option would be the most practical means of establishing a cadre of reservist CA instructors.

The next step will be to implement a standardized CA course at CAG level, graduation from which should be made a pre-deployment requirement. Since the course would be run as part of the unit's pre-deployment training program it would not be curtailed by reservist drill limitations.

There is also a need to train CA field grade officers from the reserve component in planning and staff work.²⁵ The typical field grade CA officer left the active duty Marine Corps as a captain or lieutenant. In the interim period it is unlikely that he has received exposure to the Marine Corps planning process to the extent that will enable him

to be a productive member of an operational planning team. Since, as we have seen, he is also unlikely to have attended any formal CA training, he is generally not well equipped for success as a staff officer.

There are two ways to address this problem – ideally both would be adopted. The first would be for each CAG to arrange for its field grade officers to go through a two-week staff planning course conducted by MSTP. The second solution would be for the active duty CA officers, having completed staff planning courses themselves, to run the CA planning teams on the MEF, Division and artillery regiment staffs while mentoring their reserve counterparts.

CA/CMO EDUCATION. Despite the prominent role that CA and CMO play in current operations, the Marine Corps' formal training and education continuum does not currently address these topics in any depth.²⁶ As one battalion executive officer said of operations in Al Anbar province: “Most of what we do over here is civil affairs stuff. We spend far more time working on building relations with the local community than we do in actual combat. The problem is that we have to learn as we go.”²⁷

At MEF level, the lack of CA expertise among planners led one I MEF planner to comment: “The problem is that we think of CMO as something that CAG does. We are all more comfortable with kinetic operations so that’s what we focus on, and then leave the detailed planning for phase IV operations to the CA guys on the OPT who often lack the background and expertise to make it work. We do this even though we all say that Phase IV is the most important phase”. Another, reflecting on the lack of emphasis placed on CMO in USMC formal schools, stated: “In the time that I spent at AWS,

Command and Staff and SAW I can think of only one occasion when we really had to come up with a detailed CMO plan.”²⁸

At regimental and battalion level in Iraq and Afghanistan, Marine commanders are making it happen, usually by designating a trusted subordinate – usually the XO or fire support coordinator – to focus the unit’s civil military operations. The lack of real civil affairs expertise at this level has meant that these officers have to learn on the job, relying on their problem solving expertise, common sense and the cultural training that they receive prior to deployment.

This situation militates for institutionalized, formal and comprehensive CMO training. To this end, the Marine Corps University (MCU) is well positioned to play a pivotal role towards the integration of CMO in the professional military education of field grade officers.

MCU should establish links with those organizations, governmental and non-governmental, who share with the Marine Corps the same areas of operations. The University should invite guest speakers from these agencies -- which would include the State Department, CIA, USAID, OFDA and various NGOs -- to talk about their organizations’ mission, capabilities and optimal integration with the military. MCU should encourage habitual interaction with these agencies to include participation in planning problems in which the agency representatives would play a dual role as exercise participants and instructors. As a response to action reports from the practical exercise Barbary Sword, conducted in December 2005, the faculty of Command and Staff College is attempting to coordinate this type of interaction. However, to date, they are not having much success due to an apparent lack of interest on the part of those agencies that have

been approached.²⁹ It will probably take higher level coordination from the President of MCU to the top levels of each agency in order to break this impasse.

Another step that the University could take to establish relationships with relevant agencies would be to encourage them to send students to MCU schools. To some extent this already happens, but there does not appear to be an attempt to target those specific organizations most likely to come into contact with the Marine Corps “down range”. To achieve this will involve some marketing – it might not be readily apparent to a higher level official in, for instance, USAID or an NGO that they might benefit from attending a Marine Corps school.³⁰

The University should establish a CA/CMO chair to complement or replace the existing Humanitarian Assistance (HA) chair. HA is one function of CA/CMO; the HA chair offers, therefore, only a narrow sight picture of civil military operations. If the HA chair remains then MCU should ensure that the incumbent is a dynamic individual with useful views on military/NGO/GO interaction. An ideal candidate would be someone who has served in both an NGO and the military, or who has held a high position in USAID.

Elsewhere, a more systematic approach to CMO education and training for Marine officers might include:

- CMO/ CA integration to the MAGTF Staff Training Program (MSTP).
- CMO/ CA instruction at career level schools and integration into practical exercises and planning problems.
- The requirement for all MEF, Division and artillery regiment staff planners to attend the one-week CMO planning course at the Joint Special Operations University.³¹

It will require full integration of CA/CMO into professional military education to ingrain this concept among Marines who have focused on conventional kinetic operations for most of their careers.

EMPLOYMENT: CA/CMO integration as a Line of Operation.³²

The recommended changes in CA training and structure will improve the Marine Corps' CA capabilities. In the short term, however, operational units need tools that will enable them to more effectively plan and execute CMO.

Integration of civil military operations begins during planning; intelligence drives the process and assesses the results. Information operations also play a key role in CMO: it is not enough to do things that benefit the local population – the positive impact must be made apparent to them and to a wider audience.³³

One method of integrating CMO would be to include CA personnel on targeting boards along with representatives from all the staff sections, fires, IO and public affairs. CJTF HOA, for instance, reached this conclusion after discovering that there was little coordination between subordinate units operating in the same countries.

In practice, however, including CA personnel on OPTs and boards achieves little unless commanders and their staffs approach CMO with the same focus that they dedicate to offensive operations. An effective method of ensuring that the same detailed planning be devoted to CMO is for it to be incorporated into standard planning procedures at MEF level and below as a line of operation.

By establishing operating procedures that deal with CMO as a line of operation, and, its function-based corollary Civil Affairs as a Warfighting Function, OPTs and targeting boards will facilitate the integration of CA/CMO with intelligence, IO and

kinetic operations thus maximizing the desired effects of each.³⁴ It will require the attention of commanders and principal staff officers with a good understanding of CMO to make it work.

CONCLUSION

Marine operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa re-affirm the lesson that operational objectives cannot be obtained by kinetic or tactical actions alone. The integration of civil military operations during all phases of an operation is often critical to its successful outcome. The Marine Corps' ability to conduct CMO is currently impeded by shortfalls in force structure, training, education and employment. The solutions proposed above would result in the establishment of a cadre of active duty civil affairs Marines, the implementation of a formal training program for CA personnel, the integration of CMO into the Marine Corps' resident schools and the use of planning procedures that focus on CMO as a line of operation.

It appears probable that United States will continue to be involved in irregular wars of an unrestricted nature involving terrorism, insurgency and civil war and requiring extensive interaction with civilian populations. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the Marine Corps to improve its ability to conduct civil military operations.

¹ The term Civil Affairs (CA) is used in Joint Doctrine to describe only those activities that are conducted by CA personnel, whereas Civil Military Operations (CMO) encompass all interaction between the military and civilian components. For the purposes of this paper, the two terms will often be used interchangeably as CA/CMO.

² The significance and breadth of CMO, and the role played by Civil Affairs, is outlined in the CA doctrinal publication: “*The Focus of CA is to engage the civil component of the operational environment by assessing, monitoring, protecting, reinforcing, establishing and transitioning – both actively and passively – political, economic and information institutions and capabilities to achieve US national goals and objectives at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of operation....*”

FM 3-05.401, Civil Affairs Tactics, Techniques and Procedures,

³ After action reports from Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan illustrate the importance of Civil Affairs to tactical operations: “As a result of (the efforts of the CA operations), the locals in turn started providing intelligence to the soldiers on who was a Taliban and who was not” 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne AAR from Operation Anaconda, Afghanistan.

In March 2004, the US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) published “Civil Military Operations in Afghanistan” a study of CMO in that country from September 2001 to December 2002. The study concluded that although the US military was ultimately successful in its conduct of CMO in Afghanistan, the mission was jeopardized by shortfalls in a number of areas – to include the number of trained Civil Affairs personnel and what seemed to be an institutional reluctance to integrate CA into operations at all levels.

Over the last two years the shortfall of CA personnel within the Army has become critical. This is likely to curtail its ability to support Marine units, as it has in the past in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa. 11th MEU in Iraq, 6th Marines in Afghanistan and CJTF HOA provide recent notable examples of the Army providing CA support. 11th MEU had an Army CA company attached to it during operations in Najaf between August and December 2004. 6th Marine Regiment also had an Army CA company attached during operations in Afghanistan in 2004. CJTF HOA, although staffed predominantly by Marines, relies exclusively on Army CA teams to execute its engagements “downrange”.

The Army has a total of 6000 CA personnel, formed into five reserve brigades and one active duty battalion within the US Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC). As of February 2005, 80 % of Army CA personnel had conducted at least one 1 year deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan and the nearly all of the remaining 20% had deployed somewhere else. The problems attendant with this operational tempo are compounded by the fact that 96% of the Army’ CA personnel come from the Reserve component. (The Cornwallis Group IX: Analysis for Stabilization and Counter-Terrorism Operations)

In the words of a recent National Defense University study (Civil Affairs at a Crossroads, NDU, February 2005), the Army is “simply running out of CA personnel for even current mission loads”. To meet this challenge the Army is responding by increasing the size of its only active component CA unit from a battalion to brigade and by augmenting its reserve component CA community with an additional 1,000 personnel. These changes will not come into effect until FY08, however, auguring no immediate relief for its thinly stretched CA units. In light of these circumstances, it would be unrealistic to expect continued Army CA support for Marine units.

While researching this paper, the author was told several times that the US Army has the “lead” on Civil Affairs, the implication being that the Marine Corps can therefore rely on the Army to augment our CA personnel shortfalls. However the latest Joint Doctrinal Publication on Civil Affairs makes no clear cut assignment of responsibility to the Army. Instead it tasks the Commander of US Special Operations Command with providing “combatant commanders with CA from assigned forces that are organized, trained, and equipped to plan and conduct CA activities in support of combatant commanders’ missions.”

In the next paragraph, the Commander of Joint Forces Command is tasked with coordinating “with the US Marine Corps for CA units from assigned forces that are organized, trained, equipped to plan and conduct CA.” For this purpose, the Publication states that the Marine Corps maintains two CAGs each of which is intended to support a MEF. (Chap 3, JP 3-57.1) No mention is made to the effect that the Marine Corps can rely on the Army to provide CA support.

⁴ This comment is based on AARs from 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines (2/6), 2/3, 3/3 and 6th Marines as well as on conversations with personnel from these units, to include Colonel Garza, former commanding officer of 6th Marine Regiment. Additionally, the author spent from mid April to mid May 2005 in Afghanistan with an advisor team.

⁵ This is evidenced by the fact that although CJTF HOA consists of about 1400 personnel in Camp Lemonier, there are, at any given time, less than one hundred CJTF personnel at the “pointy end of the spear”, and most of these are in civil affairs teams.

⁶ From 1 March 2005 to 10 April 2005, the author was assigned to CJTF HOA. During this period he visited Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen in conjunction with CA teams from the Army’s 96th CA battalion. Unless otherwise stated, comments pertaining to the conduct of CMO in HOA are taken from his notes and from interviews with members of the 96th, to include a former director of the Army’s CA Qualification course, Major Fred Little.

⁷ Colonel Ballard, CO 4th CAG, Al Anbar Province, December 2004. This comment was echoed in the report from the OIF Commanders’ Conference convened by the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned in June 2005.

Comments pertaining to CMO in Iraq are also drawn from the author’s personal observations during two tours in that country in the course of which he was attached to US and Iraqi Army units and traveled extensively throughout Anbar and Nineveh provinces.

⁸ 3rd CAG is at Camp Pendleton and 4th CAG is at Anacostia Naval Station, Washington DC.

⁹ The comments concerning current Marine CA numerical shortfalls are based on:

1. Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) report: Civil Military Operations in OIF II, June 2005.
2. Discussions with 4th CAG CO and officers, December 2004.
3. Interview with Lt Col Kraig Kenworthy, CA Integration Officer, MCCDC, Nov 2005.
4. MCCDC Position Paper, 13 July 2005.
5. AAR from MARFORRES CAG conference, June 2005 (MCCLL)

¹⁰ In the fall of 2005, the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) compiled a comprehensive collection of CA related AARs and interviews from OIF II, entitled Civil Military Operations, OIF II. The publication includes input from the OIF II commanders’ conference and from the MARFORRES CAG conference, both held in June 2005. A recurrent theme of this report is that during OIF II, Marine CA personnel demonstrated a lack of experience, training and planning expertise. (Point of Contact: Col Sinnott, Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned)

The author’s observations of one Regiment and 9 Marine infantry battalions in Iraq during OIF I and II include these examples which appear to be typical and illustrative of the problem:

- A Marine artillery battalion whose primary focus had become the conduct of civil affairs. The battalion did not have attached to it a CA team – just one officer who was described by the battalion commander and his XO as having had no training. The result was that the XO was assigned the duties of the CA officer.
- A Marine infantry battalion in which the responsibility for coordinating the battalion’s CA efforts had been assigned to the Fire Support Coordinator, an artillery officer. The Battalion had a CA team, headed by

a Major, who according to the Battalion's XO and Operations Officer lacked the experience and training for his assigned mission.

-- A Marine Regiment assigned the mission of establishing a CMOCC, discovered that its assigned CA team although enthusiastic and conscientious, knew no more than any other member of the Regimental Staff as to how to go about doing this.

The author's own experiences of Marine CA shortcomings included a farcical episode during the transition to Phase IV of Operation Al Fajr, the attack on Fallujah. The author's unit ran a humanitarian distribution point out of a mosque in the center of the city. It quickly became apparent that there was no real coordination of the CMO effort with the result that the Iraqi Army unit to which the author was assigned received a stream of contradictory instructions as to the treatment of refugees. The CMOCC operated by 4th CAG, demonstrated marginal awareness of either the tactical or humanitarian situation. At one point the CMOCC was using loudspeakers to lure residents to the local HA centers, not realizing that Marine units had imposed a 24 hour curfew. During one 24 hour period the author's unit was instructed to shelter and feed refugees, not to feed anyone, expel all refugees from the mosque, re-admit them, test them for gunpowder, search their homes and expel them again.

¹¹ 6th CAG, for instance, was formed in early June 2005 and deployed in September. During its pre-deployment training it received one 2 week block of CA instruction (20 June – 1 July) (Case Study, 6th CAG, Presentation by Transition Task Force, December 2005)

¹² ALMAR 061/05. The proposed date for the first artillery regiment to be fully operationally capable in this regard is 1 Nov 2006 (Transition Task Force Presentation, December 2005)

¹³ The Transition Task Force has already identified weaknesses with the proposal. In their mission analysis conducted in December, 2005 they highlighted the unresolved issues:

-- Lack of CA personnel
-- Lack of standardized CA training
-- Mobilization time for reservists will infringe upon time available for pre-deployment training (Transition Task Force Presentation, Dec 2005, and interview with Lt Col Tim Parker, CO 2/10, Dec 2005)

¹⁴ For instance, when 3rd CAG deployed for OIF II in February 2004, only 29 of its complement of the 195 personnel had deployed with the unit for OIF I. 4th CAG estimates that they lost 60% of their personnel between OIF deployments (Lt Col Kenworthy, 4th CAG).

These deployments were planned and scheduled several months in advance. The nature of the mobilization process means that reserve Marines will usually not be available for deployment with the first echelon of units responding to a contingency.

¹⁵ Local politics can not be avoided in the conduct of civil military operations. This is a lesson that was learned in by civil affairs personnel in Sicily in 1943 and is equally relevant to the US military's current experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa. Unless the nuances of local politics are understood, US military units will often unwittingly be manipulated into carrying out the partisan agenda of local leaders. This underscores the importance of having CA personnel whose training has steeped them in local culture, religion and politics.

¹⁶ The mission of the 96th CA Bn is to "Train, organize, resource, certify, and rapidly deploy regionally-oriented, language-qualified, Civil Affairs teams/individuals to the Unified Commands in order to assist inplanning for, monitoring, and executing CMO in support of US objectives during peacetime, contingencies, and war." Mission Statement taken from the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) Reference Book. Both Marine and Army reports from Afghanistan and HOA have reaffirmed the requirement for a unit with this mission. The PKSOI report cited above named the 96th CA Battalion as being key to the Coalition's success and recommended that the size of the battalion be increased

The selection and training undergone by the 96th CA Battalion personnel provides a disturbing contrast with their Marine counterparts who rely mostly on on-the-job training.

The battalion draws the majority of its enlisted personnel from the combat arms; currently, most still come from the Special Forces community though this is likely to change over the coming months because of competing demands on that community. All are carefully selected for their maturity and proven record of leadership; all are above the rank of E-5.

It is a pre-requisite for all officers assigned to the Battalion that they be branch qualified in their primary MOS. For instance, an infantry officer will have commanded a company and will have attended the career level school for captains before applying for a tour with the Battalion. Of those who do apply, on average one third are selected to attend the 9 week CA qualification course at the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg. They also receive language and regional studies training at the SWC. Upon promotion to Major, these officers have the option of applying for career field designation as civil affairs officers, which will mean attending graduate school before continuing in the CA community. The selection rate for those who apply is only about 20 %.

¹⁷ The MARFORRES CAG Conference in June 2005 recommended the establishment of a third standing CAG.

¹⁸ If the existing 2 CAG system is retained, only 34 of the 51 active duty Marines would be needed to deploy with their parent CAG. This would allow for the remaining 17, to attend schools and to fill liaison billets with governmental agencies and NGOs. (See Appendix 1). These billets would help solve the interagency coordination problem.

¹⁹ This proposal is likely to elicit strong opposition from the artillery community, as did MCCDC's proposal to give artillery regiments the mission of CMO. However, the recommendation to draw the active duty CA component from the artillery community would have little impact on the ability of Marine artillery to accomplish its primary mission since these Marines would do their CA tours in lieu of the standard non - operational force tour (known as a "B Billet) that all Marine officers are required to take.

²⁰ Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, "Civil Military Operations, OIF II", a summary of CMO related AARs. These AARs highlight the need for more cultural and language training. For instance, a CAG team leader, returning from OIF 2-3, described his pre-deployment cultural training as being "90% bad". (Interview transcript, CAOCL website, TECOM)

²¹ The full length course at DLI is 18 months and has a very high attrition rate. This is one of the causes for the critical shortage of Arab speakers in the Marine Corps. Pending a Marine Corps language immersion course (see below), it may prove more practical to send selected CA Marines through one of the shorter immersion courses offered by FSI or the USAF's Language and Area Studies Immersion program (LASI).

The CAOCL, established in the summer of 2005, falls under the Marine Corps' Training and Education Command. Its mission is to ensure that "Marines are equipped with operationally relevant regional, culture, and language knowledge to allow them to plan and operate successfully in the joint and combined expeditionary environment: In any region of the world; In current and potential operating conditions and targeting persistent and emerging threats and opportunities" (CAOCL website). The Center's vision statement describes it as is the Corps' "one-stop" clearing house for operational culture and language training. The Center was established as a response to OIF AARs that emphasized the importance of realistic cultural training for Marines deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq. Although the CAOCL coordinates basic language instruction for deploying units, it does not yet offer a more thorough immersion course designed to create fluency, but has designs to do so in the future. Currently the only service to run a language and culture immersion course is the Air Force whose LASI program runs 4 and 6 week courses.

²² In OIF II, after action reports specified that CAGs were deficient in the following high demand areas of expertise: business development, civil engineering, municipal government, public health, project management, justice, Arabic language, inter-agency planning, and food-water-fuel distribution. Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, "Civil Military Operations, OIF II", a summary of CMO related AARs.

²³ The MCCDC CA integration officers (Lt Col Kenworthy and Lt Col Montgomery) estimate the number of Marines who have attended the 2 week Army CA course as less than 10%. Neither knew of any Marines who had attended the full CA qualification course.

²⁴ This may be possible to coordinate between MCCDC and TRADOC thus avoiding the necessity for a formal inter-service request. The Marine Corps may have to offer instructors as a quid pro quo in order to obtain the required school seats. Such an arrangement would actually benefit the Marine CA community by building a cadre of experienced CA instructors with insight into the Army's method of operating. This would give the Marine Corps access to all the Army's CA courses:

1. Civil Affairs Course – 9 weeks
2. Civil Affairs Reclassification course – 6 weeks
3. Mobilization Civil Affairs Course – 4 weeks

Army CA training, whether resident or conducted by MTT, should be used with a view to establishing a *standardized* Marine course. To date this has not been accomplished although the CAGs have established their own in-house training programs. These courses have ranged in length from 8 to 14 days and have received mixed reviews. (Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned: Civil Military Operations in OIF II)

²⁵ In a comment typical of those made by Division and MEF planners, one Division staff officer described the CAG staff during OIF I and II as being “out of their league and incapable of conducting staff functions”. Colonel Toolan, then commanding officer of 1st Marine Regiment, commented that the lack of experience among CA planners prevented them from “peeling the onion” on CA project planning (MCCL, CMO in OIF II, Sept 2005).

²⁶ Currently, no Marine Corps career level schools (MCU or EWS) conduct courses in CA/CMO. The Command and Staff College and MSTP have started to conduct practical exercises that involve CMO but neither curriculum covers Civil Affairs or CMO in any detail.

²⁷ Major Tim Parker, Executive Officer (now CO) 2/10, Taqqadum, Iraq, January 2005.

²⁸ Lt Col Wayne Sinclair and Major Alan Ford, MEF Future Operations cell, I MEF, December 2004.

²⁹ Lt Col Mike Morris, Faculty Advisor, Command and Staff College, April 2006.

³⁰ MCU offers seats to the State Department but not specifically for USAID or OFDA. These are significant omissions. USAID, for example, has around 750 Foreign Service officers with regional knowledge, expertise in a wide variety of functional areas related to civil affairs and established relationships with key personnel in the host nation governments in Iraq, Afghanistan and HOA. USAID deals with NGOs on a habitual basis, by providing funding for NGO managed -- relationship that the latter is inclined to find more palatable than dealing with the US military. In some countries, USAID's relationship with the host nation government allows it freedom of access to areas of the country that could not be obtained by the US military applying through the host nation Ministry of Defense. In Yemen, for instance, USAID has better access to the hinterland than any of the NGOs currently operating in the country. In countries where the security situation is not as dire as that which exists in Iraq or Afghanistan, USAID often takes a lead role in coordinating the efforts of the US military and NGOs. This is the case in Yemen, for example, where the senior USAID representative holds what are in effect target coordination meetings involving the CFJT HOA CA team detachment as well as representatives from various Yemenese ministries and NGOs. (Author's observations, Yemen, March 2005)

In Afghanistan, as we have seen, the same synergy has been achieved through the employment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams. The PRTs are commanded by military personnel, but consist of representatives from the Afghan government, USAID, NGOs and military and civilian specialists in various areas of expertise. The PRTs actually provide a great model for the future of civil military coordination. The military leadership provides the organizational skills and direction for the PRT, enabling the USAID

representative to coordinate the efforts of the disparate team members. (Author's observations, Afghanistan, April-May 2005)

USAID offers the military an invaluable asset in our conduct of CMO, but it is too early to claim that we have successfully integrated USAID personnel into our civil military operations across the board. Although the efforts of the USAID representative in Yemen and the PRTs in Afghanistan provide examples of a good working relationships, USAID representatives in other countries in HOA and elsewhere, are less than proactive in working with the US military. In Iraq for instance, the inability to fully cultivate the USAID relationship has at times, complicated our civil military operations. (Interview with Col Ballard, CO 4th CAG, Dec 2004)

While it will be difficult to integrate an already strained USAID staff into military operations, even at the MEF level, it is well worth the effort of seeking their input and participation on OPTs and targeting boards whenever practical and relevant. The establishment of a USAID CMO chair at MCU and the increase of fellowship opportunities and exchanges are also likely to improve operational coordination "downrange". This will, in turn, lead to more effective coordination with host nation and governmental organizations.

³¹ The two courses offered by the JSOU at Hulbert Field are the Joint Civil Military Operations course and the Joint Civil Military Operations Campaign Workshop; both are one week long.

³² "(Lines of Operation are) tools to aid designing major operations. They help commanders visualize the operation and shape their intent...Commanders link multiple objectives and actions with the logic of purpose, cause and effect...Commanders synchronize activities along multiple lines of operation to achieve the desired end state....." FM 3-0

The term "Line of Operation" has crept into the Marine Corps operational parlance over the last couple of years. Simply stated, lines of operation are a means of grouping, by method and effect, a series of planned events or tasks. Within each line of operation these tasks are further categorized for planning purposes by the six Warfighting Functions: command and control, maneuver, fires, logistics, intelligence and force protection.

33 The author observed only 2 battalions in Iraq that appeared to be using IO effectively to back up their CA actions. In one case the (Army) battalion commander had secured a weekly slot on local TV and radio channels, which he used to talk about what his battalion, had done for the local community and to field questions from the public. In the other, a Marine battalion, the officer in charge of IO and CA had established a habitual relationship with the local TV channel and used it to good effect to counter pro-insurgent propaganda. Unfortunately, both these battalions were the exception.

³⁴ I would also argue that Information Operations should be included as the eighth Warfighting Function given the importance of IO to operations from the tactical to strategic level.

Appendix 1
Active Duty CA T/O Options

Option 1: 102 (48/54)

Under current system of 2 CAGs:

51 (24/27) to each CAG over and above the CAG's current T/O.

Of these 34 (16/18) could support the CAG's deployment in the following billets:

CAG HQ (1/1)

MEF Command Element (4/2)

Division G-X (4/2)

Artillery Regt (4/4)

Artillery Battalion (1/3)

Inf Regt (2/6 – 1 team to each of 2 Regts)

This would allow the remaining 17 from the deploying CAG to either remain in the States to attend training or deploy with the CAG and be assigned to direct support teams as directed by the CAG commanding officer.

The 51 assigned to the other CAG would be able to attend CA qualification and specialized training. They would also provide the training cadre for the CAG as it mobilizes.

3 CAGs:

34 to each CAG as part of the current T/O. This would enable three CAGs to function at full T/O.

Option 2: 68 (32/36)

2 CAGs: 34 (16/18) to each CAG

3 CAGs: 22 to each CAG. When deployed these could fill the HQ billets (CAG, MEF, Div and artillery regiment) only.

Option 3: 44 (26/18)

This option would support 2 CAGs at a time (CAG, MEF, Div and artillery regiment only). The 3rd CAG would receive its active duty component upon mobilization. This option places emphasis on providing planning expertise to headquarters elements – hence the smaller ratio of enlisted personnel.

Appendix 2
Active Duty CA Augmentation of the artillery regiment

The Artillery/ CMO Transition Task Force proposed the following T/O for CAG augmentation of the artillery regiment and subordinate battalion.

If one of the options outlined in Appendix 1 is implemented, the active duty CA Marines would be best placed in the billets highlighted in bold.

CA Detachment OIC (Lt Col)

CA Operations Officer (Major)*

Assistant Operations Officer (Capt)

Judge Advocate (Capt)

CA Operations Chief (Gy Sgt)

Displaced Persons/Refugee Tm Officer (Capt/Lt)

DPRT NCO (Sgt)

Interpreter (Sgt)

Contracting Officer (Capt)

Preventative Medicine Officer

Environmental Sanitation Tech

Civil Affairs Teams X 3 (one of which will be active duty):

Team Leader (Capt)

Tm Sgt (SSgt)

Tm member (Sgt)

Interpreter (Sgt)

* This is a billet not identified by the Transition Task Force.

Number of active duty Marines augmenting the artillery regiment: 8 (4/4)

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